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ABSTRACT

Since its establishment in 1960, the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia has had responsibility for documenting Saudi administrative literature, the official publications of Saudi Arabia, and the literature of regional and international organizations through establishment of the Document Center in 1961. This paper presents the experience of the IPA in the documentation of administrative information. Highlights include: the objectives of the Document Center; users of the center; administrative sections; the collection; and stages of information technology developments, including features of the Nomo and Nomo II information retrieval system. (MES)

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The Institute of Public Administration's Document Center:
From Paper to Electronic Records - A Full Image Government Documents Database

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Abstract:

Since its establishment in 1960, the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia has had responsibility for documenting Saudi administrative literature, the official publications of Saudi Arabia, and regional and international organizations, through establishment of the Document Center in 1961.

This paper will present the experience of the Institute of Public Administration Document Center in the documentation of administrative information and the stages of information technology developments in managing the collections of the Center.

I. The Document Center:

In order to achieve its goals of documenting administrative information, the IPA established the Document Center with the mission to acquire and organize the administrative documents of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and making them available to its users.

(A.) Objectives[1] of the Document Center :

1. Acquiring and collecting of government documents and official publications of regional and international organizations and agencies.

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2. Setting the working policy and procedures for acquisition, organization, and services.
3. Collecting official newspapers of the Arab countries.
4. Organizing of the collection according to the cataloging and classification rules.
5. Providing document services.

(B.) Users[2] of the Document Center :

1. Government agencies.
2. Staff and students at the IPA.
3. Researchers and graduate students from outside the IPA.

(C.) Administrative Sections:

1. The department of government documents and official publications: it is responsible for acquiring, organizing, and information disseminating.
2. The department of archiving: Its responsibility is to take care of electronic document scanning and micro-copying for documents and national newspaper.

(D.) The collection:

The collection of the center is divided into two main groups: Saudi administrative literature and the official publications of Saudi Arabia and the regional and international organizations. The IPA/DOC center succeeded in acquiring its collection through cooperation with other Saudi government agencies.

Table 1: Document Number by type up to the end of April, 2001

Type	Quantity
Royal Decrees	2093
Royal Orders	2127
Directive Orders	2333
Council of Ministers Decrees	23104
Ministerial Decisions	16011
Circulars	6535
Letters	3760
Agreements	150
Others	134
Total	56247

The IPA/DOC center was able to build its collection of all types of Saudi administrative documents to more than 56380 documents (see table 1). Also the collection of official publications of Saudi Arabia and international organizations includes publications issued by government organizations and private enterprises in both the Kingdom and other countries that have diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia has grown to more than 5296 volumes. (See table 2)

Table 2: The collection of Official Publications

Type	Collection		Total
	Arabic	Others	
Saudi Government Publications	1970	250	2220
International organizations	1763	1313	3076
Total	3733	1563	5296

The card catalogue was used to organize the collection. Each bibliographic record contains the following fields:

- The document title, number and date of issue.
- Type of document.
- Issuing body.
- Subject headings.

The original copies of the documents were kept in boxes and classified according to its original source and chronological order.

(E.) Stages of information technologies developments:

The document center has experienced several stages of technological developments.

1. The first stage started in the beginning of 1981. The IPA/DOC Center and the computer department at the IPA designed and built the first in-house software package at the IPA, called Nomo. The card catalogue was converted to the electronic format of Nomo. This development helped the user access the collection easier and faster by means of the following access points:

- Accession Number
- Number and date of issue
- Issuing body
- Related document number
- Subjects
- Abstract
- Microfiche reference

The original copies of the documents were photocopied on microfiche. All information about the slide number, the shot number, and the number of pages was included with the document bibliographic record.

2. The second stage began in 1993 when the officials at the IPA/Doc center decided to build another system in order to keep up with advancement in information storage and retrieval technology. The new software was tested and ready for operation by the end of 1994. It was called Nomo (II). Consequently, all bibliographic records were transferred from Nomo to the Nomo (II) system.

As a result of this stage, the user of Nomo II had instant access to the original copy of the document by displaying it on the computer monitor. This feature was done by using the technology of document scanning and optical storage. The IPA/Doc center was able to expand its use of technology, so they acquired the appropriate hardware and software to connect Nomo (II) databases with images of the original documents stored on two optical disks.

Functions of Nomo (II):

The new version of Nomo (II) consists of the following functions:

- Recording, Cataloging, Retrieving
- Production of statistics and reports
- System administration and maintenance

Features of Nomo (II):

Nomo (II) has the following features:

- Dial-up connection
- Keyword searching of the abstract
- Several access points:
  - Document number
  - Document original source
  - Document type
  - Title

Nomo (II) Main Screen:

All information stored in the system can be navigated through the main screen (See Figure 1). Users can access the system by selecting one of the following access points:

1. Searching module.
2. Cataloging module.
3. Reports module.
4. Statistics module.

Figure 1: Nomo (II) Main Screen

The Searching Function:

Users can search for any document (see figure 2) by:

1. Subject headings.
2. Document title, type, date, number, and accession number.

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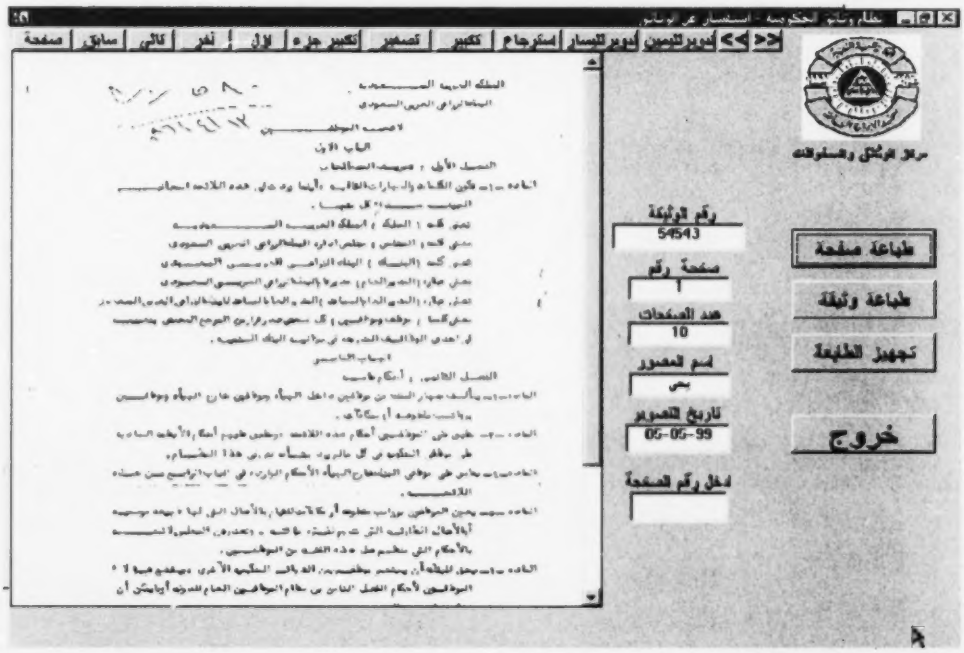
3. Source of the document.
4. Reference number of the document image stored on the optical disk.
5. Free text search in the abstract only.

Figure 2: Nomo (II) complete searching record

When a user searches for a document, he/she can see a copy of the original document displayed on the computer monitor (see figure 3). This will allow the user to decide if he/she needs it before printing.

Figure 3: Nomo (II) complete searching record



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II. Conclusion

In conclusion, the IPA/DOC center has moved into first place among government information centers in collecting and managing administrative information, and in making it available to decision makers, researchers, and users.

Success in designing an electronic information system that can store a bibliographic record and display an image of the original document has helped the IPA/DOC center to compete with others in the digital age of information.

[1] Al-Askar, Fahd. (1993) "The Experience of the IPA Document Center." Paper presented to a symposium on the documentation of administrative information from May 27 to 28,1989. Riyadh: the Institute of Public Administration. (In Arabic)

[2] Al-Askar, Fahd. (1993) "Measuring the usage of administrative documents at the Institute of Public Administration." Paper presented to the IAIDPA meeting in July 23,1993. Toluca, Mexico.